

Beverly Vista School, Administration Building **HABS No.** CA-2704-A  
(Beverly Vista School, Building A)  
200 South Elm Drive  
Beverly Hills  
Los Angeles County  
California

HABS  
CAL  
19-BEVH,  
3A-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107**

HABs  
CAL  
19-BEVH1,  
3A-

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**

**BEVERLY VISTA SCHOOL, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING (Building A)**

**HABS NO. CA-2704-A**

**Location:** 200 South Elm Drive. Building A faces west onto South Elm Drive in the City of Beverly Hills, Los Angeles County, California.

Beverly Hills, California 7.5-minute USGS Quadrangle,  
Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Coordinates:  
Building A: Zone 11, Easting 371960, Northing 3769420

**Present Owner:** Beverly Hills Unified School District (BHUSD or District)  
255 South Laskey Drive  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

**Original Use:** Public Elementary School; Administration offices and Classrooms

**Present Use:** Elementary School, however, Building A is vacant

**Significance:**

At Beverly Vista, the Administration Building (Building A) is a fine example of public school design. The first building to be erected on the campus, Building A, was designed by architect Francis J. Catton in the Italian Romanesque Revival style. Incorporating the distinguishing characteristics of this architectural idiom such as brick exterior walls, a tiled roof, an extensive and unifying use of arches as a decorative motif, and a tower which is reminiscent of ecclesiastical Romanesque precedents. The use of the Romanesque Revival style also represents a distinctly traditional choice of architectural imagery. While all of the other schools in the Beverly Hills Unified School District showcase the Spanish style, that eventually became integral to the mythology of southern California, Beverly Vista suggests a more urban approach to school design. Built in 1924, Building A is the oldest extant public school building constructed by the District in Beverly Hills.

**A. General Statement:**

**1. History:**

Approved by the Beverly Hills Board of Education in April 1924, the first unit of Beverly Vista School, the Administration Building (Building A), was designed by Francis J. Catton and was constructed in 1924. Alterations to this building include replaced windows, with opaque panels in the transoms, and metal coping at the roofline.

**2. Architectural Character:**

Building A's Italian Romanesque Revival styling sets the tone for the campus design. Building A incorporates the distinguishing characteristics of this architectural idiom such as brick exterior walls, a tiled roof, and an extensive and unifying use of arches as a decorative motif which is reminiscent of ecclesiastical Romanesque precedents. Further, Building A is a good example of public school design.

**3. Summary Description:**

Two-stories with subterranean basement and capped with a flat roof, Building A is symmetrical in composition. Bricks varying color from tan to red to brown sheathe the structure while decorative elements are executed in cast stone. A central block with three bays of windows projects slightly from the facade and is capped by a raised parapet. To the left and right of the central section, the side wings contain five bays of windows. Cast stone archivolts spring from spiraled columns to frame the round-headed, central entry. The double door is glazed and topped by an arched transom. Above the entry, a row of blind arches fills the spandrel. Single, round-headed windows are located in the side bays flanking the entrance. Arched openings, separated by colonnettes, define the central bay on the second story. All of the other windows on the facade are two-over-two metal sash with transoms, flat heads, and raised, stone sills. Arched corbel tables band the side wings below the second story window sills. Another corbel table is located below the parapet over the central portion of the facade.

**B. Description of Exterior:**

**1. Overall Dimensions:**

The rectangular shaped Building A measures approximately 60'-0" by 128'-6" with a height of 35'-0" to the top of the parapet. The total square footage of the building is 16,103.

**2. Foundations:**

A concrete post (pier) and girder foundation with concrete "T" shaped footings.

**3. Wall Construction:**

Unpainted, wire-cut brick masonry varying in color from brown to red to ochre set in a common bond pattern.

**4. Structural System, Framing:**

Unreinforced masonry walls. Concrete framing work was added for seismic strengthening 1934.

**5. Porches, Balconies, Bridges:**

There is a bridge to Building B with a covered walkway below it.

**6. Chimney:**

None

**7. Openings:**

**a. Doorways and Doors:**

Main entry is centered along the west elevation and is recessed within a foyer which is approached by three concrete steps above street level. The main entry door is a large double wood door with 3/4 glazing and 6 light transom. Secondary entries are along the north and south elevations and are double wood doors with 9 lights over a single panel with fanlight transoms. Service entries face west from the staircase wings. A panel door to the basement is located off the rear elevation. Another panel door to the bridge is on second floor of north elevation. Service entry doors are six panel double doors with fanlight transoms.

Door features include: main entry frontispiece: rusticated cast stone with central archway elaborately detailed with engaged, spiraled columns and patterned archivolts. There is a molded pediment above the arched opening. A row of blind arches spring from colonnettes above the pediment. The foyer is illuminated by a cast iron and glass pendant fixture. Side entries have decorative cast stone surrounds. Service entries are highlighted by spiraled, cast stone jambs with soldier brick archivolts.

**b. Windows:**

The original multi-light, wood-framed windows have been replaced with metal framed, three part divisional sash windows. The top sashes are filled in with solid panels. The original fenestration configuration along all elevations has been retained. Banks of five, equally spaced, flat-headed, vertical windows define the classroom spaces along the west and east elevations. Single, round-headed windows of equal proportion to classroom windows flank the main entry on the first floor while three, round-headed windows are centered above the main entry. Three, smaller, round-headed windows ascend each of the staircase wings. All windows are recessed. Window features include the following: raised sills composed of header bricks topped by concrete; bands of cast stone arched corbeling are below the west elevation's second-story classroom windows; spandrel panels decorated with blind arches are below the windows that flank the main entry and; slender, engaged, cast stone columns carrying soldier brick archivolt framed the arched window openings over main entry.

**8. Roof:**

**a. Shape, Covering:**

Building A has a flat roof with parapet. The staircase wings are capped with shed-roofs covered with red clay roofing of barrel-shaped tiles. A cast stone stringcourse is along the top and bottom of parapet. The cornice is accented with cast stone cornice molding.

**b. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers:**

None

**9. Architectural Details:**

Architectural details include: cast stone corbel course above second story center bay; cast stone corbel courses at cornice on north and south elevations and; circular brickwork trimmed with stone keystones on second story level of north and south elevations.

**C. Description of Interior:**

**1. Floor Plans:**

While the exterior of the building exhibits a sophisticated architectural vocabulary, the interior spaces of Building A are straightforward and utilitarian in character with little, if any, architectural detailing. Building A features interior layouts that utilize double-loaded corridors off of which rectangular shaped classrooms open. Classrooms are illuminated with windows across one wall and have cloakrooms in the rear of the spaces.

**a. Basement**

The partial subterranean basement contains the main electrical and boiler rooms for campus. (See basement floor plan layout)

**b. First Floor Plan:**

Double-loaded corridors run north-south with administrative spaces (originally classrooms) of uneven sizes occupying the first floor. A short hallway leads from the main entry to the reception area and the principal's office off the east side of the main corridor. A janitor's closet is located at the northwest end of first floor. The first floor configuration is primarily intact, however, the classrooms have been substantially altered from original. (See first floor plan layout)

**c. Second Floor Plan:**

Double-loaded corridors run north-south with four single and one double classroom opening onto them. The double classroom was created by the removal of the original partition wall. (See second floor plan layout)

**2. Stairways:**

Staircases at north and south ends of building. Plaster stairwell walls, exposed painted concrete ceiling, concrete floor with safety treads. Railings removed. Wood cap on stair wall on north stair. South stairwell enclosed by construction of storage room.

**3. Flooring:**

The building has concrete flooring in the hallways, maple wood floors in the classrooms, and white hexagonal tile flooring in the restrooms.

**4. Wall and Ceiling Finish:**

The first floor contains lath and plaster walls trimmed with base boards and chair rails. The second floor also contains lath and plaster walls and both the first and second floors have dropped acoustical tile ceilings.

**5. Openings:**

**a. Doorways and Doors:**

Classroom doors are non-original single slab wood doors with narrow lights glazed with safety glass.

**b. Windows:**

The overall fenestration pattern has not been extensively altered. The interior walls surrounding the window openings retain their original configurations, materials, and detailing in most locations.

**6. Decorative Features and Trim:**

The walls are trimmed with baseboards and wood chair rails.

**7. Hardware:**

Non-original door hardware throughout building.

**8. Mechanical Equipment:**

**a. Heating:, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:**

Heating: Rooms were originally heated using a low-pressure steam boiler (in basement) and individual steam radiators (in classrooms). These radiators are intact and are attached to the classroom walls beneath the windows and are enclosed with non-original security cases.

Air Conditioning: The building was not originally fitted with air conditioning. A centralized system with cooling tower was installed at some unspecified date.

Ventilation: Ventilation was originally provided by the windows.

**b. Lighting:**

Original electric lighting was incandescent. Non-original suspended fluorescent lighting is now throughout building.

**c. Plumbing:**

The stock room at the northeast corner of the first floor was originally the Boys' restroom. All plumbing fixtures are gone. A Mens' restroom, situated mid-way along the first floor corridor along the west wall, was added at some unknown date. This restroom contains modern plumbing fixtures. The Girls' room on northeast end of second story is intact and has gray-white marble partitions, original porcelain valve toilets, and original cast iron trough sink.

**d. Fixtures:**

Cloakrooms with sinks are at one end of each classroom.

**9. Original Furnishings:**

Chalkboards and trays (some original, some replaced) are on two or three walls of each classroom.

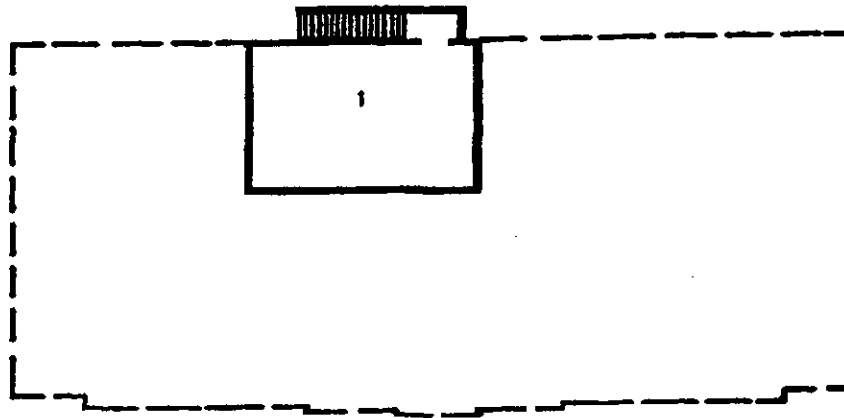


BEVERLY VISTA SCHOOL,  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING (BUILDING A)  
HABS NO. CA-2704-A  
PAGE (8)

**Prepared by:** Janet Ostashay, Director of Cultural Resources Management  
Leslie Heumann, Principal Architectural Historian  
PCR Services Corporation  
233 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 130  
Santa Monica, California 90401

**Date:** December 1999

**BUILDING A - CURRENT BASEMENT PLAN**



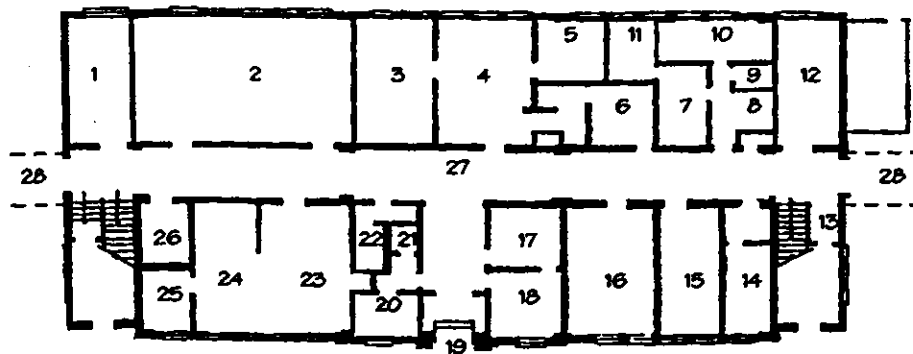
**BUILDING "A" BASEMENT PLAN**

**LEGEND:**

- 1 MAIN ELECTRICAL/BOILER ROOM



**BUILDING A - CURRENT FIRST FLOOR PLAN:**

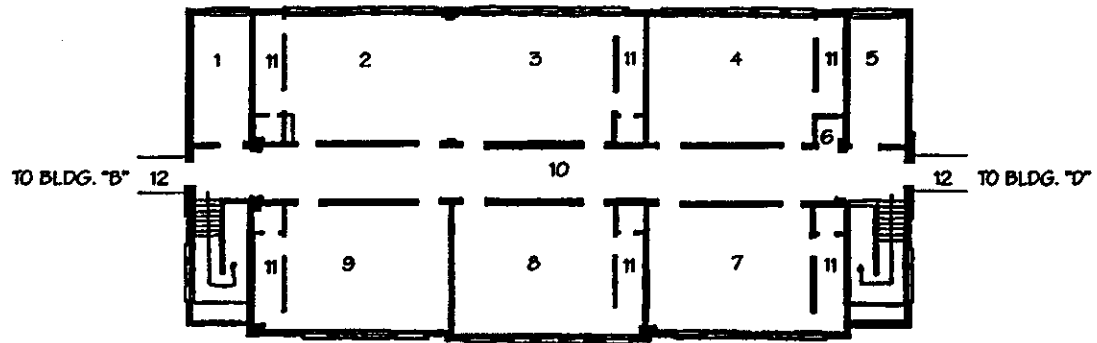


**BUILDING "A" FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

**LEGEND:**

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 STORAGE ROOM                 | 15 COUNSELOR              |
| 2 ESL K-5                      | 16 READING ROOM           |
| 3 PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE           | 17 P.T.A. CONFERENCE ROOM |
| 4 RECEPTION                    | 18 SPEECH THERAPY         |
| 5 ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE | 19 MAIN ENTRY             |
| 6 CONFERENCE ROOM              | 20 COT ROOM               |
| 7 NURSE                        | 21 WOMEN'S RESTROOM       |
| 8 WAITING                      | 22 MEN'S RESTROOM         |
| 9 NURSE'S RESTROOM             | 23 LOUNGE                 |
| 10 SPECIAL TESTING             | 24 FACULTY WORK ROOM      |
| 11 EXAM                        | 25 STORAGE ROOM           |
| 12 STORAGE ROOM                | 26 STORAGE ROOM           |
| 13 JANITOR                     | 27 CORRIDOR               |
| 14 HVAC ROOM                   | 28 COVERED WALKWAY        |

**BUILDING A - CURRENT SECOND FLOOR PLAN:**



**BUILDING "A" SECOND FLOOR PLAN**

**LEGEND:**

- |   |                  |    |                  |
|---|------------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | GIRL'S RESTROOM  | 7  | FOREIGN LANGUAGE |
| 2 | 5-TH GRADE       | 8  | SDC              |
| 3 | 5-TH GRADE       | 9  | 5-TH GRADE       |
| 4 | FOREIGN LANGUAGE | 10 | CORRIDOR         |
| 5 | BOYS RESTROOM    | 11 | STORAGE          |
| 6 | JANITOR          | 12 | BRIDGE           |